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ABSTRACT

The "logos" concept of Martin Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy refers to a perceptual attunement to "Being," or reality as a whole, which is prior to language. Logos includes every way in which people interpret, constitute, and interact with their world. Language is seen as prior to our awareness of Being, as well as constitutive of it. Logos, language, and speech have a teleological meaning aside from their function in communication; they are the means by which we create a personal world in which we dwell. An implication of Heidegger's philosophy for a theory of intrapersonal communication emerges in the view of truth as "aletheia," or the uncovering or disclosing of the world to the individual, rather than as a correspondence to reality. "My truth" is the result of the way the world has disclosed itself to me; no one is "wrong." A second implication arises from Heidegger's stress on language as constitutive of individual perception. Language is not merely a tool, it is a major influence on the way we perceive our world; perhaps by altering or expanding the equipment which the individual uses to shape his or her perception, the very nature of that perception might be changed. (DF)

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When a phenomenologist examines speech and language use, he is primarily interested, not in the way in which they are used in intersubjective communication, but in their function as a bridge to Being and to experience outside the individual. For Martin Heidegger, language was "the House of Being" amd a major epistemological force in man's creation of his personal world.[1] James M. Edie described the Heideggerian approach to language by stating that ". . . language is not essentially and exclusively for communication, it has a more important function within the tissue of experience. It is because man speaks that he has a world."[2]

For Heidegger, "speech" was not limited to verbal assertion or vocal proclamation in words. Heidegger was also interested in the processes of interpretation and thought formation prior to speech which might or might not result in assertion or "speaking out," as he called it. Verbalization was a possible but not necessary outcome of the prelinguistic processes of thought and interpretation which Heidegger labeled logos. In Being and Time, a good deal of attention was devoted to the phenomenon of logos as it relates, not only to speech, but to man's understanding of his experience. The purpose of this paper will be to explain and interpret Heidegger's treatment of logos in Being and Time and to discuss its implications for a theory of intrapersonal communication.

In Western philosophy and theories of communication, logos has most often be treated under the rubric "logic." This came to refer to the processes of reasoning or formal thought. When Heidegger uses the word logos, however, he means something quite different. In Being and Time Heidegger returns to the

the original meaning in Greek of logos which was that which "let something be seen."[3] Logos formed the ground of communication which allowed man to perceive the world in its togetherness and relation. Logos was a gathering together, a collecting. In this sense, logos was not only perceiving, it was interpreting as well. As Thomas Fay explained, Heidegger's concept of logos was "an attentive listening, a harkening, an essential attunement . . . to the voice of Being."[4]

Closely tied to logos was Heidegger's concept of truth. He rejected the traditional notion of truth as a standard of agreement between a judgment and its object. This notion of the degree of truth arising from a correspondence between an act of judgment and the "real" content of an object began with Aristotle. Heidegger returned to the pre-Aristotelian notion of truth as an uncovering or unveiling of Being. The difference here lies in the role of the subject. Instead of degignating something to be true because it corresponds to his judgment, the subject lets something be seen as such. In assertion or speaking out, for example, "the Being-true (truth) of the assertion must be understood as the Being-uncovering. Thus truth has by no means the structure of an agreement between knowing and the object in the sense of a likening of one entity (the subject) to another (the Object)."[5] In referring to this interpretation of truth, Heidegger used the original Greek word, aletheia.

What relationship does logos have to aletheia? Very simply, logos as a prelinguistic perceptual and interpretive attunement to Being is the primary means by which aletheia as an uncovering comes to pass. This is a mutual process in which logos and Being simultaneously encounter and disclose themselves to each other. Or, as William Richardson has put it, "this single process

may be conceived as proceeding from two directions at once: from that which lies forth, as if it were emerging of itself [Being]; from that which lets it lie-forth, therefore lets it be [logos]. . . ."[6] An understanding of this process can be attained by examining Heidegger's account of a speech act, including the intrapersonal process of understanding and interpretation which precede it.[7]

Assertion ("speaking out") is a form of interpretation which in turn is a form of understanding. Understanding and interpretation are prior to and constitutive of assertion which may or may not follow from them. In understanding, man projects himself toward his possibilities in a process of self-development.[8] Understanding constitutes a forestructure which projects itself in interpretation.

Interpretation, in turn, functions as disclosure. In interpreting we see something "as" something with which we are concerned and which discloses itself to us. Heidegger carefully points out this disclosive aspect of interpretation in terms of our prior involvement in understanding. "In interpreting we do not . . . throw a 'signification' over some naked thing . . ., we do not stick a value on it; but when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation."[9]

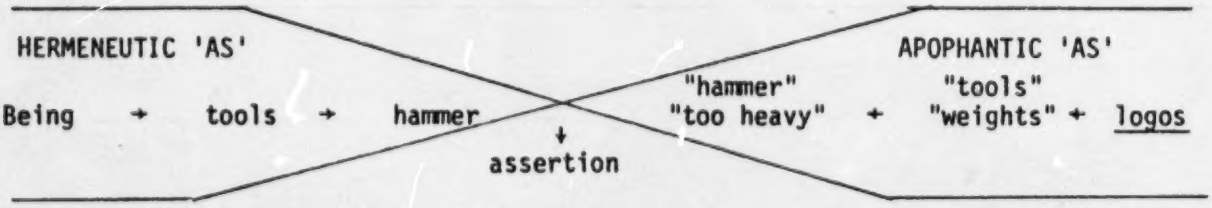
Heidegger here makes a distinction between two forms of interpretation. The first, which occurs prior to assertion, results when in my actions I focus on an available object and become "circumspectively concerned" with it. This Heidegger calls the "hermeneutic 'as'" of interpretation. In preparing to use a certain hammer, for example, I see the hammer 'as' hammer. "Interpretation,"

as Heidegger observes, "is carried out primordially, not in a theoretical statement, but in an action of circumspective concern--laying aside the unsuitable tool, or exchanging it, 'without wasting words'."[10] The second interpretive 'as'--that which relates to assertion--Heidegger calls the "apophantic 'as'." In this form of interpretation, a property or definite character is assigned to the object with which we were hitherto concerned in our actions. As the apophantic 'as' attempts to appropriate what has been understood, it narrows the field of possible involvements for the object. The hermeneutic 'as', then, operates in the realm of man's involvement with his world whereas the apophantic 'as' operates in regard to man's involvement with his language.

Each form of interpretation has three stages. The first, the vorhabe or fore-having, provides the foundation for interpretation and is composed of the totality of involvement which is already understood. The second, the vorsicht or fore-sight, is the stage wherein man begins to appropriate or 'takes the first cut' out of the forehaving. The third stage of interpretation, the vorgriff or fore-conception, is what we finally settle on in advance or how we decide to conceive the object of the interpretation.[11] Overall, the process of interpretation moves from formless, undifferentiated prior understanding to differentiated and specific conception.

Let us examplify this movement in terms of a specific speech act. Suppose that in the course of setting to work I discover that my hammer is too heavy. Thus understanding of the hammer's relative heaviness is grounded in my prior involvement and experience with the world of tools and work. If I wish to express this, I must first have interpreted this aspect of my world as it has disclosed itself to me. Both Being and logos constitute the fore-having.

The fore-having results from my prior experience with the physical world of tools and the experiencing of "weight." It is also composed of logos or undifferentiated prelanguage. In moving into the interpretive stage of fore-sight, I narrow my interpretation in the realms of being and language and consider a limited range of alternative tools, weights, and verbal symbols to express my experience. In fore-conception, the last interpretive stage before assertion, I settle upon the words "hammer" and "too heavy" and at the same time, perhaps, decide to discard the present hamer in favor of a new one.



This, then, is a mutual narrowing-down process wherein logos and being disclose themselves to each other in a progressive convergence which may result in assertion.

Assertion is the process of speaking out in words and is always preceded by understanding and interpretation. Like interpretation, assertion has three stages according to Heidegger's analysis. The first is that of "pointing out"; the second is "predication" or assigning a definite character; the third is communicating or sharing meaning.[12] In our example of "The hammer is too heavy," I first point out the hammer and cause my companion to focus on it rather than on other available objects. I next assign a character ("too heavy") to it, and then I share my experience of the hammer with my companion. Like interpretation, assertion involves a narrowing-down process which brings a meaningful disclosure of the world into man's experience.

Now that the various forms of interpretation and assertion have been described, we might pause to reconsider that presymbolic function which Heidegger calls logos. You will remember that language was only one of the forms which logos could take, and you may well ask what other forms of consciousness are subsumed under the logos concept. A close examination of Being and Time as well as Heidegger's other writings reveals that he includes all forms of meaning-appropriation and interpretive perception in logos.[13] Surprisingly, keeping-silent and listening-to are both constitutive activities and therefore forms of logos. This may be difficult for those sensitive to the sender/receiver dichotomy to understand, but we must remember that Heidegger defined logos as a perceptual attunement to Being which is prior to language. Therefore, forms of logos often "do not receive verbal expression." Man hears because he understands and hearing is constitutive for discourse.[14] Hearing, then, is a form of logos. Likewise, Keeping-silent is a form of logos because "in talking with another, the person who keeps silent can 'make one understand' (that is, he can develop an understanding) and he can do so more authentically than the person who is never short of words."[15] This description leads one to conclude that every way in which man interprets, constitutes, and interacts with his world can be included in the logos.

In Heidegger's later writings logos and language become increasingly important in man's experience.[16] Heidegger investigates the relationship between language and logos and concludes that language is prior to and constitutive of man's awareness of Being. Joseph Kockelmans described Heidegger's position accurately in regard to this question.

> When a man speaks, he takes up a language that is already constituted in his speech, he listens to what this language has to say. To say

> something means to point something out, to show it. Language says something, shows something, lets something appear. Man must listen to language in such a way that he lets its saying speak itself out to him. In his own speaking, which essentially implies his listening to language, man must 'say after' what he has heard before.[17]

The word brings a thing into man's awareness. The word opens up Being to man and sustains his relationship to Being. Language and the word, then, have a vital function in regard to man's consciousness. "The word belongs to what is there . . . [and] conceals within itself that which gives Being. . . . The word itself is the giver. What does it give? . . . The word gives Being."[18] We can only conclude that the word is constitutive of thought and is the major epistemological means by which man gains access to the world.

Logos, language, and speech, then, have a teleological meaning aside from their function in communication. They are the means by which man creates a personal world in which he dwells. This is what Heidegger meant when he said "Language is the house of Being." Since language and logos form man's experience of Being, for him they are Being. We should not assume at this point, however, that man is a passive agent, formed, created, and determined by language. Heidegger defined logos as a gathering, a collecting, and he sees man as the gatherer. "The word preserves what was originally collected. . . . Standing and active in the logos, which is ingathering, is man the gatherer."[19]

What are the implications of Heidegger's thoughts on language and logos for a theory of intrapersonal communication? I believe they emerge in two areas. First, the discarding of the notion of truth as a correspondence to the Real has implications for our notions of intrapersonal perception and interpretation. Truth as aletheia is an uncovering or disclosing of the world

to me and the logos by which that occurs is mine and specific to me. The interpretive and perceptual processes of the logos are a result of my unique involvement in and prior understanding of my world. We cannot speak, then, of the truth, but only of my truth or your truth. My truth is the result of the way the world has disclosed itself to me in my experience. This brings to mind that statement by Hugh Prather oft-quoted in interpersonal communication texts.

> No one is wrong. At most someone is uninformed. If I think a man is wrong, either I am unaware of something, or he is. . . . "You're wrong" means "I don't understand you"--I'm not seeing what you're seeing. But there is nothing wrong with you, you are simply not me and that's not wrong.[20]

Heidegger seems to echo Prather's statement when he maintains that "Being-with develops in listening-to one another. . . . If we have not heard 'aright,' it is not by accident that we say we have not 'understood.' . . . Listening-to is [man's] existential way of Being-open and Being-with for Others."[21]

A second implication for intrapersonal perception arises from Heidegger's stress on language as a constitutor of individual perception. The way I see and interpret my world is inextricably linked to my prior experience with language. Language is not merely a tool which I use; it is a major influence on the way I perceive my world. While some research has been done on the influence of language on thought, intrapersonal perception, and interpretation, much more is needed.[22] By altering or expanding the equipment which the individual uses to shape his perception (that is, his language), can we change the very nature of that perception? Heidegger would answer this query with a firm "yes," but his claim is yet to be validated.

Hermeneutic phenomenology endeavors to examine and describe the ways in which man's consciousness interacts with his world. The eventual goal of

phenomenology is to uncover and explain the processes by which this occurs. The phenomenologists' central concern is the individual's interaction with himself and his personal awareness and interpretation of the world. The present investigation into Martin Heidegger's theory of logos should indicate fruitful avenues of inquiry into perception, interpretation, and meaning-appropriation for the researcher interested in intrapersonal communication.

NOTES

[1]Thomas A. Fay extensively discusses Heidegger's analysis of man's relationship to language in his Heidegger: The Critique of Logic (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), pp. 93-109.

[2]Cited from a discussion following Joseph J. Kockelman's paper, "Ontological Difference, Hermeneutics, and Language," in On Heidegger and Language, ed. Joseph J. Kockelmans (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. 227.

[3]Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 56. The first German edition of this work, Sein und Zeit, appeared in 1927.

[4]Fay, p. 97.

[5]Being and Time, p. 219.

[6]"Heidegger and the Origin of Language," International Philosophical Quarterly, 2 (1962), 407.

[7]John Searle differentiates a "speech act" from an occasion in which one just utters sounds and makes marks by stating that in the case of a speech act one produces sounds and marks "characteristically said to have meaning, and a second related difference is that one is characteristically said to mean something by those sounds or marks. . . . In speaking a language I attempt to communicate things to my hearer by means of getting him to recognize my intention to communicate just those things." See Searle's "What is a Speech Act?" in Philosophy in America, ed. Max Black (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 228.

[8]Being and Time, p. 188.

[9]Ibid., p. 191.

[10]Ibid., p. 200.

[11]Ibid., p. 191.

[12]Ibid., p. 196-97.

[13]Kockelmans (in his Introduction to On Heidegger and Language, p. xii) observes that Heidegger even includes forms of artistic expression, such as music and art, in logos. In one of his later essays Heidegger did claim that a Grecian temple and a classic painting are works of logos and "let unconcealment as such happen in regard to what is as a whole. . . . Beauty is one way in which truth occurs as unconcealment." See his "The Origin of the Work of Art," in Philosophies of Art and Beauty, trans. Albert Hofstadter; ed. Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 680-81.

[14]Being and Time, p. 206.

[15]Ibid., p. 208.

[16]Much of Heidegger's later writings on language appears in two works, An Introduction to Metaphysics [Einführung in die Metaphysik (1935)], trans Ralph Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959); and On the Way to Language [Unterwegs zur Sprache (1950-59)], trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

[17]"Ontological Difference, Hermeneutics, and Language," in On Heidegger and Language, p. 212.

[18]On the Way to Language, pp. 87-8.

[19]An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 172.

[20]Cited in John Stewart, Bridges Not Walls (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1973), p. 88.

[21]Being and Time, p. 205.

[22]The question of the relationship between language and thought has always fascinated me. Heidegger seems to believe that language precedes thought, while other philosophers would claim the reverse. Jean Piaget has observed that this is one of the most difficult and profound problems of contemporary philosophy, and he speculates that thought and language emerge simultaneously, each dependent on and building from the other. He cites experiments in which the development in children's operational level of thinking could not be accelerated by equiping them with a higher echelon vocabulary. He concludes that linguistic training will not cause a commensurate advance in operational thinking. He also states that more research is needed in this area. See his Structuralism, trans. and ed. Chaninah Maschler (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 92-6.